



I try not to get my life off-balance by doing too much. When I have done enough of something I leave it until the next day and relax with my embroidery or card making. What I am finding however, is that I can no longer multi-task and



embroidery

have to concentrate on one job at a time. This sometimes causes problems when writing one of the Doodles because I am focussed on the Doodle instead of concentrating on the task



in hand. Let me give you a couple of examples. On one occasion I sat down for my meal and poured out a cup of tea only to discover that there was only hot water in the teapot and no teabag. How silly is that! The other thing that has happened several times when I have been Doodle-thinking, is that I

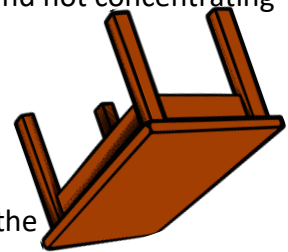


put bread under the grill and gaze out of the window thinking, 'Now what pictures would be suitable?' The next minute smoke is puthering from the grill and my smoke alarm is going off. Oh dear me; you get an Amazing Doodle and I get burnt toast. Why? It is because I am off-balance and not concentrating properly on making the meal.

Jesus in the temple

Can I suggest that you read Mark 11: 15 – 19 before going any further.

One day Jesus was passing through the 'Court of the Gentiles' on His way into the temple when He was annoyed and upset at what was taking place. He tipped over the tables of the money-changers and the benches of the pigeon sellers. He said, "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers." Why did He act in this way? What was happening that caused Him such distress? Some people think that Jesus was saying that buying and selling should not be taking place on the temple premises (Or on church premises) but, that is not correct.



Back-tracking

When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt about 1400 years BC, God said through Moses, that He was their God and wanted them to be His people. They had only known life as slaves, most probably also been influenced by the gods of the Egyptians. God laid out a plan so that the people could make a fresh start and build up a relationship with Himself. He instigated a system whereby the people could make amends for wrong-doing by making sacrifices. Sacrifices had been made for quite a while by their predecessors, but now the people were told how to make sacrifices according to what they had done wrong. Their financial situations were also taken into consideration. Sacrifices included animals, pigeons and grain.

ANIMALS

PIGEONS

GRAIN

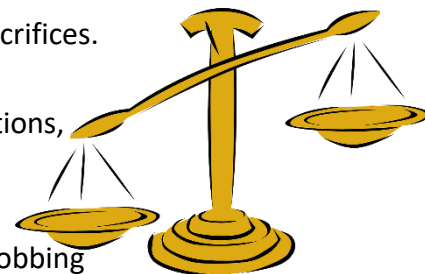
By the time of Jesus the people normally worshipped in their local synagogues, but, at least once a year they had to travel to the temple in Jerusalem in order to make the necessary sacrifices. Some were having to travel for several weeks so it was not practical to take their sacrifices with them. One of the outer courts at the temple was named the 'Court of the Gentiles' and it was there that the people were able to purchase the appropriate thing that was needed for their sacrifice.

Currency

Only certain currency was allowed to be used in the temple so in the Court of the Gentiles there were money-changers who would change the currency for the purchase of sacrifices.

What did Jesus see?

If the buying, selling and money-changing were all part of God's instructions, why was Jesus annoyed by it all? Well, there was deliberate off-balance taking place. The money-changers who were seeing to the currency were not charging the correct rate of exchange, so in effect they were robbing through their deceit. Those who measured out the grain – often purchased by those on low incomes, were fixing the scales off-balance and giving short measure, so again the people were being robbed.



What did Jesus do?

The action of Jesus was quite startling. Can you imagine what it would have been like? When He tipped the tables of the money-changes coins would be falling out of the money pots and going all over the floor. Those weighing out the grain would have that spilt on the floor. The sellers would be very angry and shouting and yelling at Jesus. The animals in the near-by pens would be disturbed by all the noise and would add to the commotion. Jesus was not one of the priests of the temple but as a speaker He obviously had authority to do what followed. He turned everyone out of the court – sellers, buyers and onlookers. In other words He completely stopped the sacrificial process as people would no longer be able to make their purchases.

Why was Jesus so upset?

If something illegal or bad happens in any of our church buildings, it always feels much worse than if exactly the same thing occurs away from the church premises. Why is that? It is because we connect our church buildings with the very presence of God. The Court of the Gentiles was the only place in the temple premises where the Gentiles were allowed to worship and pray. It was not only the robbery and deceit that was taking place that Jesus found upsetting, but also because it was all happening where part of that area was designated for the Gentiles to pray. No wonder Jesus said that it was a 'House of prayer' made into a 'Den of robbers'



To think about

If there is an off-balance in our lives through overwork or lack of concentration, we are usually able to correct that. What about deliberate off-balance?

- **We are robbers if we are deliberately not filling in our tax forms honestly.
- **We are robbers if we omit details on insurance forms in order to obtain a lower quote.
- **We are robbing our employers if we do not work the hours for which we are paid.
- **We rob God if we are not giving Him our tithes.

God does not want us to be off-balance in any way. It is His desire that we stay in-balance so that we can keep in a close relationship with Him.